



# United States Mint Unveils Illinois Quarter

January 6, 2003

## *Popular 50 State Quarters Program Honors 'Prairie State'*

United States Mint Director Henrietta Holsman Fore joined First Lady Lura Lynn Ryan today at the James R. Thompson Center to unveil the Illinois State quarter, the 21st in the 50 State Quarters Program.

"The Illinois quarter sends a powerful message," said Director Fore. "It highlights how the state's agricultural traditions and business and financial climate — all the things that make Illinois a major hub of international commerce — rest on Lincoln's legacy of integrity and hard work."

Illinois was admitted into the Union on Dec. 3, 1818, becoming the 21st state. The Illinois quarter design depicts a young Abraham Lincoln within the outline of the state. A farm scene and the Chicago skyline appear on opposite sides of the outline. The design also contains 21 stars and bears the inscriptions "21st State/Century" and "Land Of Lincoln."

The Illinois state quarter is the third U.S. coin to feature Lincoln but the first to feature him as a young man. The other two are the current circulating one-cent coin and a commemorative Illinois Centennial Half Dollar of 1918. The image of young Lincoln featured on the quarter is based on a sculpture by Avard Fairbanks titled "The Resolute Lincoln."

Governor George Ryan created the Governor's Classroom Contest to solicit ideas from school children about the coin's design. The Governor's office received more than 6,000 submissions, of which nearly 5,700 were from students. A 14-member committee was convened to review the submissions, and to suggest three to five concepts to be forwarded to the United States Mint.

The United States Mint officially released the Illinois quarter to the Federal Reserve Bank on January 2, 2003.

Monday's launch ceremony featured remarks from noted Illinoisans, including actor/screenwriter Harold Ramis, State Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka, State Historian Dr. Tom Schwartz and State FFA President Jay Kelley. The event also included music from the Lake Bluff Middle School Choir and rising Springfield singing star Clayton Ann Joyner, age 12.

50 State Quarters products, including the popular collectible proof sets featuring the five state quarters of each year, are available on the website, [www.usmint.gov](http://www.usmint.gov), and by calling 1-800-USA-MINT.

Launched in 1999, the United States Mint's 50 State Quarters Program is a 10-year initiative that honors each of the states in the order that they were admitted into the Union. Each quarter is produced for about 10 weeks and will never be produced again. Surveys show that over 139 million adults are collecting the quarters, of which five are released in any given year.

Created by Congress in 1792, the United States Mint is the manufacturer of legal tender coinage for the United States. In fiscal year 2002, the United States Mint manufactured approximately 15 billion coins and generated revenue of \$1.8 billion. With facilities in five states and the District of Columbia, the United States Mint has customers in 54 countries and is the world's 30th largest e-retailer.

For more information, please visit [www.usmint.gov](http://www.usmint.gov).

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